

# Money, Sex and Power: Concerning a Fake Biography of Guy Debord

By Gianfranco Sanguinetti<sup>1</sup>

*Translator's note:* One of the reasons Gianfranco Sanguinetti wrote this text is that Jean-Marie Apostolidès has claimed that it was Sanguinetti's own archives, now in the hands of Yale University, that allowed him to write a new book, indeed a second book, about Guy Debord. A member the Situationist International (SI) from 1969 to 1971, Sanguinetti was close to Debord, who co-founded the SI in 1957. The two men remained friends well into the 1970s.

Any real opponent must be destroyed; it is necessary that his or her memory is dishonored; any possible emulation must be prevented. People like Walter Benjamin must be pushed to suicide.<sup>2</sup> Jean-Marie Apostolidès' book *Debord Le Naufrageur*<sup>3</sup> answers these requirements. Animated by what Spinoza would call the "sad passions," its author is in accord with the current neo-conservative era. This book was written for this particular era, not to last.

Our era is the first in universal history that claims to have only the enemies that it itself has fabricated, in its image [*à sa mesure*] and for its spectacular use. By projecting all of its own particular infamies and cruelties upon these simulated enemies, this new century makes it seem as if it were resolutely opposing them. It even feigns to fight them with weapons, if it is necessary to convince the voters of the reality of this opposition, in order to have its "good" qualities" triumph over [those of] its "enemies," who are as dangerous as they are fake, whether it is [Osama] Bin Laden or the Islamic State.

So as to only combat the artificial enemies that it itself has placed on the scene, our world must apply itself to erasing and destroying – even in memory – its real and declared enemies so that the new century will avoid all risks of

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<sup>1</sup> "Argent, Sexe et Pouvoir: a propos d'une fausse biographie de Guy Debord." Datelined Prague, 31 December 2015, and signed Gianfranco Sanguinetti. Published on 15 January 2016 by Mediapart: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/lechatetlasouris/blog/150116/argent-sexe-et-pouvoir-propos-d-une-fausse-biographie-de-guy-debord>. Translated from the French by NOT BORED! on 27 January 2016. All footnotes by the author except where noted. All passages in brackets [thus] are by the translator.

<sup>2</sup> *Translator's note:* Walter Benjamin committed suicide on 26 September 1940 while fleeing the Nazis.

<sup>3</sup> *Translator's note:* *Debord the Shipwrecker*.

undesirable contagion. It is required by the current permanent state of emergency – the state of emergency, declared against society, with the pretense of being against the obscure and indeterminate enemy that the spectacle itself has created, [i.e.,] artificial terrorism.<sup>4</sup> It has created and staged [this] to convince us that the States fight against “evil” for our “good,” and to persuade us that the one who fights the “absolute evil” is, as a result, already the “absolute good.” Every day the Ministry of Truth oversees the “correction of History,” whether it is a question of what recently happened at Bataclan<sup>5</sup> or elsewhere, with each day bringing new details, without any concern for possible self-contradictions, because new corrections will be made the next day.

To have done with even the residue of real opposition, the current form of domination must make examples, it must burn witches, it must execute – even in effigy – any and all enemies who differ from the official ones, who are named each day. Not only must they destroy all real [living] opponents, but also all those who once lived: the memories and examples they left behind must be erased, destroyed or dishonored. All hopes of revolt and [radical] change among the young generations must be frustrated and crushed; all of their predecessors, and even the memories people have of them, must be suffocated. All possible emulation must be prevented. People like Walter Benjamin must be pushed to suicide. Lists of enemies [*listes de proscription*] must be drawn up. Because of the imperative necessity of only allowing onstage the fake and fetishized enemies that one has wanted to exist, the real revolts, as well as the real rebels, must be completely annihilated, eliminated, censored, slandered, and pilloried.

The most recent work by Jean-Marie Apostolidès, published by Flammarion, answers this urgent and unavoidable necessity precisely. More than 500 pages long, with more than 90 footnotes, weighing almost two pounds, costing 28 Euros, titled *Debord Le Naufrageur*, [and published] in a collection called Great Biographies.

Right away, it must be said that this book, in addition to being a lethal bore, isn't a biography at all, as I will demonstrate, and that I only devoted three hours to reading it, because it will be agreed that it isn't necessary to drink 500 liters of wine in order to decide that it is good or bad, or to establish that it really isn't wine at all, as is the case here.

The author promptly tells us that his task is to “present a different, ‘negative’ image of Debord,” which, he arrogantly assures us, “isn't an easy thing to do.”<sup>6</sup> Whether it is “an easy thing to do” or not, I can state that there's

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<sup>4</sup> *Translator's note*: cf. Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *On Terrorism and the State*, translated by Bill Brown (Colossal Books, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> *Translator's note*: a reference to the terrorist attacks carried at Bataclan and elsewhere in Paris on 13 December 2015. Cf. Sanguinetti's comments: <http://www.notbored.org/Paris-13-11.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. [http://next.liberation.fr/livres/2015/12/23/guy-debord-n-a-pas-ete-capable-d-appliquer-dans-sa-vie-les-principes-qu-il-revendiquait-en-theorie\\_1422482](http://next.liberation.fr/livres/2015/12/23/guy-debord-n-a-pas-ete-capable-d-appliquer-dans-sa-vie-les-principes-qu-il-revendiquait-en-theorie_1422482).

never been a real biography whose task or goal has been to present either a “negative” or “positive” image of the life of the person in question. That’s the task of propaganda. The negative has no noble dialectical connotation for this author. For him, the “negative” has a commonplace meaning: slanderous, morally dishonorable. As trite as that. And that’s all.

A [real] biography is the work of an archivist, a philologist, a scholar and a historian, and it is never the work of a fan, whether he or she is favorable or hostile. Biography is not a football game. It is even less the work of an always-arbitrary psychoanalyst. Ever since the Renaissance, the terms in which one presents the history of a man’s life have been well established: What did he say? What did he do?<sup>7</sup>

The prince of modern biographers, Roberto Ridolfi, who left us definitive masterpieces about the lives of Machiavelli, Guicciardini and Savonarola, has even established that certainly “love and friendship help us understand (...) If a Constitution of the Literary Republic must be drawn up (and we hope that one isn’t), it should obligate biographers to only render portraits of men with whom they are at least in part similar and equal. Thus a certain quantity of weak, mediocre and false books would be avoided.”<sup>8</sup>

With Apostolidès’ work we are confronted with the very paradigm of a bad work, “weak, mediocre and false.” – Let me make this clear. It is bad in its intentions, bad in its methods and, consequently, very bad in its results.

It is bad in its intentions because it isn’t a biography of Debord at all, but a verbose bit of investigatory journalism conducted against him, in which only the prosecution’s “witnesses” are heard, in which nothing is said of his works, his art and his times,<sup>9</sup> his cinematic works, his courage during periods of virtual isolation. Thus, this book has no value for historians; it is not a work of documentation. And the author’s use of documents is perfectly dishonest, because he only chose what might be “negative” [*à charge*]. Here the true immediately becomes a moment of the false, as if to prove once more [the truthfulness of] what Debord said<sup>10</sup> to those who know how to understand him.

This is without speaking of the cowardice of someone who has tried so maladroitly to assassinate a man who is already dead. As everyone knows, cadavers attract vultures. Thus this book stinks of death. The author is animated by what Spinoza would call “the sad passions” and, in this, he is perfectly in

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Francesco Guicciardini, Benedetto Varchi, Giorgio Vasari, Ludovico Ariosto and a hundred others.

<sup>8</sup> Roberto Ridolfi, *Vita di Francesco Guicciardini*, Belardetti, Rome 1960.

<sup>9</sup> *Translator’s note*: the French used here, *de son art et de son temps*, is an allusion to the title of Guy Debord’s last film.

<sup>10</sup> *Translator’s note*: Thesis 9 of Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) states, “In the world that is *really inverted*, the true is a moment of the false.” This is a détournement of Hegel’s “Preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*” (Thesis 39): “Yet we cannot therefore say that the false is a moment of the true, let alone a component part of it.”

accord with the neo-con era, which, it seems, suits him perfectly. It was in fact for this era that this book was written, not for the future. It will be quickly forgotten.

In its work methods, this is a very bad book because it judges the past with the eyes and the “values” of today. But the first duties of a [real] biographer are ensconcing oneself completely in the historical context and grasping the motivations, dynamics and conflicts that pushed the protagonist into action. And yet I have found nothing that, for example, demonstrates the valor and bravery of the situationists, in general, and of Debord, in particular, who were the only ones in their era who fought the dominant spectacle of the contradictory lies of the Left and the Right, both Western “liberty” and Eastern “equality,” and at the same time that people like Apostolidès were successively showing their reverence for the Pope, Lenin, Trotsky, Mao and Castro.

The archival work is perfectly improper and tendentious; the philological work is like that of a police investigation; the scholarship is partisan and brief; and both historiography and honesty are absent.

I would have liked to have spoken about the work and not its author, but that has proved impossible because his work only speaks about him, about his mind, about his intentions and goals in the creation of this work, which took him 10 years to write after 40 years’ of reading. Or so he says.

In its results, this book is very bad because the person who emerges here doesn’t at all resemble Debord, whom I knew well. This alleged biography in fact enlightens us more about the obsessions, pettiness and baseness of its author than it claims to discover in Debord. He neither sees nor seeks beyond these things and, on our side, all we see is his lamentable malevolence, his resentment and his gossipy animosity. Seeing with the ideological, deformed and uncritical eyes of our ignorant era, he misreads the vicissitudes, the meanings, the stakes and the values of the era in question – values that we in fact rejected. It is completely anti-historical to judge the preceding century or the radically contentious position that we took in the dull light of the “*politically correct*”<sup>11</sup> or “*gender theory*”<sup>12</sup> [of today]. If Apostolidès had read Machiavelli’s correspondence, which is full of women and pederasts, pedophiles and prostitutes, of life such as it really is, he would have been scandalized, and he would have written a huge tome to warn us that Machiavelli wasn’t “a great man.” He can have his fatty and sticky opinions, which only tell us about him.

One must render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to Brutus what is Brutus’. One must recognize that, without the theory of the spectacle elaborated by Debord, this world would have remained perfectly incomprehensible and uncertain, just as those who dominate it would like it to be, and as it in fact

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<sup>11</sup> *Translator’s note:* English in original.

<sup>12</sup> *Translator’s note:* English in original.

remains for Apostolidès [and his ilk]. But not for those who bear heavy military or economic responsibilities in it. If a Chief of Staff can't quickly understand what is hiding behind the Islamic State, this has greater consequences than if some university professor is in the dark. And to understand it, it is useful, even essential, to know the theory of the spectacle. After 50 years, the theory of the spectacle remains the indispensable Rosetta Stone for the decoding of the hieroglyphs of the current world. But this surpasses the interests of our college professor.

George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and [Debord's] *The Society of the Spectacle* are the three books from the Twentieth Century that are essential to understanding the Twenty-First.

With respect to the things that interest this professor, there are glaring falsifications of the facts in his book. For example, it is completely false to say that Debord raped his sister. They loved each other – right there, there's the crime! But so what? The dust and cobwebs that envelop the obsessed head and soul of the author [also] imprison him in a hypocritical morality and a politically correct dishonesty that spread throughout his book. Because I haven't found them all, but have seen quite enough of them, I won't count up all the falsifications, the factual errors, in the hermeneutics and even in the dates, nor will I contest his grand and quite arbitrary interpretative scheme, which is drenched in the psychoanalytic sauce in which the author soaks his tedious, repetitive and inaccurate discourse, flavored with the neutral pseudo-deodorant of university research.

This alleged biography in fact principally informs us about what this teller of mythological tales finds notable about Debord, and he only speaks to us of the trivia that is useful for his preconceived thesis. All of Debord's thought, works and actions – as well as the groups that he animated, and the general historical context in which and against which they lived – all this completely disappears. This book ignores the Strasbourg Scandal and its crucial influence in the unleashing of May 68. The struggle and its stakes, which were quite serious, are absent from this book. The author also completely ignores the influence of and follow-ups to situationist theory and practice. The first instance of *street art*<sup>13</sup> and guerrilla art was our installation of the statue of Charles Fourier, Place Clichy, in 1969.<sup>14</sup> He ignores the Yes Men's magnificently successful created-situations; the Russian groups Voina and Pussy Riot, which refer to Debord and the situationists; the Czech group Stohoven; Banksy; the Kommunikation Guerilla; the Hacktivists and a thousand other variations of putting this heritage into practice that I won't mention here. And this without counting the influence of certain forms of [situationist-inspired] *détournement*,

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<sup>13</sup> *Translator's note:* English in original.

<sup>14</sup> *Translator's note:* for more about the situationists' recreation and reinstallation of the statue Charles Fourier, which had been removed by the Nazis in the 1940s and left absent by the French since then, cf. <http://www.notbored.org/fourier.pdf>.

class struggle and sabotage carried out in the factories, in Italy and elsewhere. It is in this that the SI was an avant-garde. But for the professor, all this doesn't exist. Where is his scholarship?

In sum, according to the author, Debord did all that he did because he didn't have a masculine presence, because of the loss of his father, when he was growing up, and this, according to Apostolidès, prevented Debord from becoming a man. He always remained immature; he never became an adult. That's all, and that's the central thesis of this book. But in this Debord is an orphan in good company, along with Nietzsche, Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky, Swift and even I myself, *si parva licet componere magnis*.<sup>15</sup> Leopardi adds more when he observes that, when "examining the lives of illustrious men, and lingering upon those who are so because of their actions, and not because of their writings, it is quite difficult to find a person endowed with true grandeur who hasn't been deprived of the presence of a father [figure] during childhood."<sup>16</sup>

Many times did Hegel royally mock what he called "psychological pettiness" and "psychological pedantry, [the] allegedly psychological consideration that believes it can explain all actions." He referred to "the psychological view of history, which means diminishing and degrading the grandeur of the actions of individuals (...). It is ignorant of the substantial aspect of individuals. It is a servant's view of psychology, someone for whom there are no heroes, not because they aren't heroes, but because they are only house servants." And again: "What schoolteacher hasn't demonstrated with respect to Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar that they acted in accordance with their passions and that, as a result, they were immoral men? From whence it follows that the schoolteacher himself is a better man than they were (...) Historical persons processed by the historiography of such servants of psychology fare poorly: they are leveled and placed on the same plane of morality, if not several degrees below those subtle connoisseurs of men." And again: "This judgmental conscience is base in its turn (...) It is also hypocritical."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Translator's note*: Latin for "If we may compare small things with great ones." Cf. Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 176. Note well that Bruno Sanguinetti died in 1950, when Gianfranco was just two years old.

<sup>16</sup> Giacomo Leopardi, *Pensées*, II, Allia, Paris, 1992. [*Translator*: Sanguinetti himself helped Editions Allia put this collection together.]

<sup>17</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophie du Droit*, § 124; *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, II, C, 2, c, III, p.195, trad. Jean Hyppolite; *La Raison dans l'Histoire*, trad. par K. Papaioannou, chap. II, p. 127; *Lezioni sulla Filosofia della Storia*, I, II, 2, d, pp. 94-95, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1972.

Allow me to note here that Apostolidès had already produced an inaccurate book full of praise, one titled *Les Tombeaux de Guy Debord*, published in 1999.<sup>18</sup>

The obligatory route of these small minds, invariably intellectual, is always the same. It is, as it were, encoded into their DNA, and it is easy to see through. This is how it travels. (1) Celebration and shameless adulation. (2) The fabrication of a mythological king.<sup>19</sup> (3) His placement at the head of a court or entourage. (4) Finally, when the risks are lower, kill the king, set up a guillotine and commit regicide in order to erase one's own baseness and ignominy as a sycophant or parasite. The same was done with Debord. The silence of yesterday's apologists is significant today: where are they hiding themselves? Was a mere Apostolidès enough to shut them down and make them melt like snow in sunlight? This, finally, is an advantage. Better their silent disappearance than their noisy arrival. It is true that the wind has changed. The Times of Terror have begun. And for the cowardly, they will never end.

As already noted, great adventures, passions, strong friendships, masculine generosity, persecution, the contempt for risks, art, play, poetry, courage, invention, creation, fun and fantasy are all perfectly absent from this book. In brief, all that a professor lacks in his own life is also lacking from his book, as is normal. Yet another proof that this work is a projection, a portrait of its author, of his problems with women, money and power, his many humiliations and grudges, and his petty desire for revenge, and thus it is not a portrait of Debord at all. This author is scandalized when he notes that Gérard Lebovici and even myself – and, of course Michèle Bernstein – supported Debord financially. According to him, Debord ripped us off. Apostolidès' pettiness prevents him from even conceiving higher reasons for such support. If this really is his standard, then he could very well accuse all the great artists of having cheated all of their patrons. He doesn't take into account the fact that these great figures gave to humanity infinitely much more than they took from it, and that all of humanity is in debt to them. The only real swindle that I can see here is Apostolidès' book.

Since the author does us the favor of never hiding his intention to denigrate – and this is only the thing in which I believe that he is rigorous and sincere – he reduces everything he touches to vulgarity, and this tells us a lot about him. Wherever one looks in this book, one only sees profoundly sordid, petty and obscene things. Henry Miller saw through it in his time: “Obscenity exists only in the minds that discover it and charge others with it.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Translator's note*: also published by Flammarion. The title might be translated as *Guy Debord's Tombstones*.

<sup>19</sup> *Translator's note*: as Sanguinetti once noted in private correspondence with me, the French, in particular, have longed for a king ever since the French Revolution.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Miller, *Obscenity and the Law of Reflection*, 1945. [*Translator*: I have quoted directly from the original English. Note well that Sanguinetti has referred to this quotation

And so, for this author, there are only questions of money, sex and power, which are the three great things with which he is obsessed, just as they obsess our contemporaries, because they are deprived of them.

Before our era, these things existed, of course, but they weren't separated from life, as they are now. People experienced them directly. And Debord said that the only possible problem with money was the lack of it.<sup>21</sup> There was solidarity, and we helped each other out, which is something inconceivable to the professor. He is so obsessive that he thinks that we must have been the rapists of young women because, being the monsters that he has portrayed us to be, there were no other means of seduction available to us! It is bizarre that no one has complained. Are they all patiently waiting for this professorial Redresser of Wrongs to see that justice is served?

If this professor had to speak about the *Odyssey*, he would only see the lice on Ulysses' head, because he can't see things bigger than he is, and he reduces everything to his size. I believe that, if he could, such a professor would like to singlehandedly ruin the reputation of Stanford University,<sup>22</sup> for here he has demonstrated his cynicism, which destroys everything he had previously respected. He seems afflicted by Thersites Complex.<sup>23</sup> By reminding us continually that he teaches there, as if this was the authorization and justification for all of his excesses, he indicates he would have no qualms about folding the university that pays him into his *cupio dissolvi*.<sup>24</sup> His cynicism also doesn't stop him from deceiving his public and his students. If it was in his power to do so, he would deceive posterity, from which he blindly expects glory, if not the other things, in exchange for this book. Now *that's* a real shipwrecker.

As if he were writing for Wikipedia, the professor adds reference notes with pedantry and meticulousness to give the impression of seriousness to his arbitrary portrait and acidic bile. But those notes only serve to fallaciously demonstrate his abusive hypotheses, and everything else escapes him. Of course, using carefully chosen references, anyone can demonstrate everything and nothing, and can render the false plausible. It seems that the goal of this author is to reverse the ancient rule: *Omnes homines honorare*.<sup>25</sup> He seems pushed by an irresistible desire to dishonor everyone and, in a rambling fashion,

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before in his text "The Pussy," and that the translator in that instance did not use the original English, and so ended up with a dreadful mistranslation: "obscenity only exists in the minds of those who reject and detest it." Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/The-Pussy.pdf>.]

<sup>21</sup> *Translator's note*: The French here is "*Et Debord disait qu'on ne peut admettre d'autre problème d'argent en dehors de son éventuel manqué.*"

<sup>22</sup> *Translator's note*: cf. the page Stanford University has devoted to him: <https://dcl.stanford.edu/people/jean-marie-apostolidès>.

<sup>23</sup> *Translator's note*: a dysmorphic syndrome, named after the ugliest soldier in Ulysses' army.

<sup>24</sup> *Translator's note*: Latin for "desire to dissolve." Cf. Paul's *Epistle to the Philippians*, 1:23.

<sup>25</sup> *Translator's note*: Latin for "Honor all men." Cf. *The Rule of Benedict* (4.8).



to dirty them with his vile tongue. Does he really believe he can elevate himself by putting others down? But here as well he fails, because the fable that he tells us only speaks of him and his misfortune.

This is in fact a pornographic book, but not good [*chère*] pornography, worthy of a stroke book, but pornography that has no place in my collection of erotic art, which nevertheless contains pretty good pieces of very beautiful porn. This is a book created in the morbid spirit of a Facebook page – and *that's* its “modernity.” With his servant's eyes, he looks through the keyhole in the master's door. For this new Erostratus,<sup>26</sup> my archives at Yale<sup>27</sup> are nothing more than a keyhole through which to watch – with the eyes of a cop – because he only sees what he seeks, everything else escapes him, and what he seeks has nothing to do with freedom, critique, struggle, poetry or anything else, except for his petty defamatory fury.

In a letter to Mustapha Khayati dated 10 December 2012 and published on the Internet by others,<sup>28</sup> I had the occasion to mention Apostolidès. Thus:

Among the apologists one can find real pearls: for example, the book by Apostolidès, which, in the fury of making me disappear, reaches philological summits never attained even by the KGB. After having claimed that the French version of the *Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy* was more “elegant” than the Italian original (!), and in order to complete his demonstration that Censor was not Sanguinetti, but Debord, he removes all doubt with the following wise lesson: “One remarks the affinities between the two names, Censor and Debord: they each possess two syllables; the vowels are identical, as are the number of letters.” The “affinity” for which I chose the pseudonym *Censor* is, on the contrary, with *Bancor*, the supranational currency invented by Keynes; it was also the penname of Guido Carli, who was the governor of the Bank of Italy at the time. That is quite far away from the furious demonstrative keenness of Apostolidès, the unfortunate orphan of Pope Pius XII, Mao and Lenin who only demonstrated that his spastic research was part of a spectacular cult of personality.

And I added this:

The first wave of makeshift “historians” has been merrily burned and sacrificed upon the altar of sycophantic praise, which – Guy,

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<sup>26</sup> *Translator's note*: cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Erostratus*, 1939.

<sup>27</sup> *Translator's note*: in October 2012, Sanguinetti sold his archives to the Beinecke Collection at Yale University.

<sup>28</sup> *Translator's note*: that would be me. Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/To-Mustapha.pdf>.

quoting Swift, liked to recall – is the daughter of existing power. If he got wind of these tombstones, I believe that he would rather have concluded with the words of Schopenhauer: “That soon the worms will nibble on my body, this is a thought that I can tolerate; but the idea that the professors will do it with my philosophy, that horrifies me.”

Such people do well to teach at a renowned university. They are incapable of conceiving a real, rigorous and serious historical-critical analysis. For them there is only sycophantic praise or cowardly outrage. In any case, this professor will remain a luminous example of what every honest and rigorous researcher must avoid, something to be shown to every student, a concrete example, if there ever was one, of the unhappy meeting of two shamelessly-spread pieces of dishonesty in a police chronicle that wants to disguise itself as a work of history. What has become of the University today? A dirty affair, like so many others, that obligates students to become indebted and enslaved and, right from the start, subjected to their adult lives. Or to enroll in the Army as a way of paying for their studies, as in the United States.

This book irremediably lacks conviction and strength, thus energy and freshness. Instead, it seems to be a bit of salaried bit of work, written on commission, a failed attempt to place Guy Debord and an entire movement in the pillory, which is quite different from a [factually] faithful, legitimate and honest critique. In any case, I am reassured because this means that the situationists, despite all their faults, continue to be an example of insubordination and a nightmare that still troubles the sleep of an era that followed their own, one that doesn't allow the existence of enemies other than those it has fabricated.

Because I love Dante's law of *contrapasso*,<sup>29</sup> what is regrettable is that this professor is too insignificant for posterity to be concerned with him. But if a biography is ever written about *him*, I would love it if it were completely honest and told us all about *his* mediocrity and ridiculousness. But who would want to read such a biography? As Virgil said to Dante (*The Inferno*, III, 47-51) with respect to weak and cowardly people:

Their blind existence is of such abjection  
That they are envious of every other fate.  
The world does not remember them at all;  
Mercy and justice treat them with contempt:  
Let us not talk about them. Look and pass on.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Translator's note*: Latin for “suffering the opposite.”

<sup>30</sup> *Translator's note*: Sanguinetti cites Jacqueline Risset's translation of the Italian into French. I have used the translation into English by C. H. Sisson.

In the interests of fairness, I will say that I appreciated seeing the little note in this book that states that the author regretted that I refused him permission to publish my photos, which is true, and I am very happy about this, because I would have been ashamed to have been thanked by such a man in such a book.

On the other hand, this book contains completely improper and deceitful acknowledgements, made by the author, addressed to several friends of mine who neither supported nor helped the author, and who are thus not responsible for it in any way. Once again, this shows the casualness of the author in deceiving his public without any qualms and by all means. Forty years ago, Debord himself cited with amusement the following passage from *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*,<sup>31</sup> which remains very relevant today: “There are times in which one must dispense contempt sparingly, because of the great number who deserve it.” Let this justify my briefness here.

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<sup>31</sup> *Translator's note:* the title of Chateaubriand's autobiography (1849-1850). Debord cited this remark in his 1975 film *Refutation of All the Judgments, Pro or Con, Thus Far Rendered on the Film "The Society of the Spectacle."* Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/refutation.html>.